

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Withdrawn): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:
a processing section for performing coating and developing processing for a substrate;
an interface section, for transferring the substrate at least via a route between the processing section and an aligner for subjecting the substrate to exposure processing, divided into a first area for transferring the substrate delivered from the processing section to the aligner and a second area for transferring the substrate delivered from the aligner to the processing section; and
a control section for controlling atmospheres in the first and second areas.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 21, wherein:
the first area comprises a chamber, disposed in the interface section, for temporarily holding the substrate delivered from the processing section and to be transferred to the aligner; and
the control section comprises an atmosphere controller for controlling an atmosphere in the chamber.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 22,
wherein the atmosphere controller reduces a pressure inside the chamber.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 22,
wherein the atmosphere controller supplied an inert gas into the chamber.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 22,
wherein the atmosphere controller supplies dry air into the chamber.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 22,
wherein the chamber comprises:
a purge room for temporarily holding and purging the substrate introduced into the
chamber;
a buffer room for holding the substrate; and
a transfer device for transferring the substrate between the purge room and the buffer
room.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 26,
wherein the buffer room has a transit opening for directly carrying out the substrate to
the aligner.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:
a coating processing unit for at least forming a coating film on a substrate;
a developing processing unit for developing the substrate;
a thermal processing unit for thermally processing the substrate;
a transfer device for carrying the substrate into/out of the coating processing unit, the
developing processing unit, and the thermal processing unit; and
a blower for sending an inert gas to the substrate which is being transferred by the
transfer device.

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 28,
wherein the transfer device has tweezers for holding the substrate, and
wherein the blower has a top cover having a blast port for sending the inert gas from
above the tweezers.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 29,
wherein a plurality of the blast ports are provided to correspond to a shape of the
tweezers.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 29,
wherein a plurality of the blast ports are provided to correspond to a shape of the
substrate.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 28,
wherein the blower has a temperature control mechanism for controlling a
temperature of the inert gas.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 28,
wherein the blower has a humidity control mechanism for controlling a humidity of
the inert gas.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The apparatus as set forth in claim 28,
wherein the blower sends the inert gas when the transfer device transfers the substrate
from the coating processing unit to the thermal processing unit.

Claim 35 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:

- a reaction inhibiting section, wherein the reaction inhibiting section controls an extent that the progress of the resolution reaction of a resist is inhibited with regard to the resist which is coated onto the substrate and is exposed, according to an area of the substrate;
- a heating section for heating the substrate processed in the reaction inhibiting section to progress the resolution reaction of the resist;
- a cooling section for cooling the substrate heated in the heating section to inhibit the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist; and
- a developing processing section for performing coating processing of a developing solution for the substrate cooled in the cooling section;

a temperature/humidity indicator detecting a temperature and a humidity in the reaction inhibiting section; and

a controlling section calculating a dew point in the reaction inhibiting section based on the indicated temperature and humidity, and controlling the temperature in the reaction inhibiting section so that the temperature is not lower than the dew point.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus, comprising:

- a first station including a mounting section on which a substrate cassette housing a plurality of substrates is mounted and a delivery means for receiving and sending the substrate from/to the substrate cassette mounted on the mounting section;
- a second station, connected to the first station, for processing the substrate transferred by the delivery means; and
- an interface section for delivering the substrate between a processing station and an aligner for subjecting the substrate to exposure processing,

wherein the second station includes:

a heating section for heating the substrate to progress the resolution reaction of the resist,

a cooling section for cooling the substrate heated in the heating section to inhibit the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist, and

a developing processing section for performing coating processing of a developing solution for the substrate; ~~and~~

wherein the interface section includes a reaction inhibiting section placed a position nearer the aligner side, and has a chill plate for controlling the reaction inhibiting section ~~controls~~ an extent that the progress of the resolution reaction of a resist is inhibited with regard to the resist which is coated onto the substrate and is exposed, according to an area of the substrate; and

wherein the apparatus has a temperature/humidity indicator detecting a temperature and a humidity in the interface station; and a controlling section calculating a dew point in the interface station based on the indicated temperature and humidity, and controlling the temperature of the chill plate so that the temperature in the interface station is not lower than the dew point.

Claim 37 (Canceled).

Claim 38 (Original): The apparatus as set forth in claim 35,

wherein the reaction inhibiting section inhibits the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist by cooling the substrate coated with the resist and exposed so as not to cause dew formation.

Claim 39 (Original): The apparatus as set forth in claim 35,
wherein the reaction inhibiting section inhibits the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist by making an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate coated with the resist and exposed smaller than an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred to the reaction inhibiting section.

Claim 40 (Original): The apparatus as set forth in claim 39,
wherein the reaction inhibiting section makes the amount of the moisture adhering to the substrate smaller than the amount of the moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred to the reaction inhibiting section by supplying a gas having a humidity lower than a humidity of air in an atmosphere in which the reaction inhibiting section is placed.

Claim 41 (Original): The apparatus as set forth in claim 35,
wherein the resist is a chemically amplified resist, the resolution reaction of which is progressed by an acid produced by exposure.

Claim 42 (Canceled).

Claim 43 (Withdrawn): A substrate processing method, comprising the steps of:
performing processing of inhibiting progress of a resolution reaction of a resist for a substrate coated with a resist and exposed;

heating the substrate subjected to the processing of inhibiting the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist to progress the resolution reaction of the resist;

cooling the heated substrate to inhibit the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist; and

performing coating processing of a developing solution for the cooled substrate.

Claim 44 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 43,

wherein in the reaction inhibiting step, by cooling the substrate coated with the resist and exposed so as not to cause dew formation, the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist is inhibited.

Claim 45 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 43,

wherein in the reaction inhibiting step, the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist is inhibited by making an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate coated with the resist and exposed smaller than an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred in the reaction inhibiting step.

Claim 46 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 43,

wherein in the reaction inhibiting step, an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate is made smaller than an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred in the reaction inhibiting step by supplying a gas having a humidity lower than a humidity of air in an atmosphere in the reaction inhibiting step.

Claim 47 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 43,

wherein the resist is a chemically amplified resist, the resolution reaction of which is progressed by an acid produced by exposure.

Claim 48 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 43, wherein:

heating the substrate comprises heating the substrate in a heating section to progress the resolution reaction of the resist; and

performing processing of inhibiting progress comprises transferring the substrate coated with the resist and exposed to the heating section while inhibiting a resolution reaction of the resist.

Claim 49 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 48,

wherein in the transferring step, the exposed substrate is transferred to the heating section while the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist is inhibited by cooling the exposed substrate so as not to cause dew formation.

Claim 50 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 48,

wherein in the transferring step, the substrate is transferred to the heating section while the progress of the resolution reaction of the resist is inhibited by making an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred to the heating section smaller than an amount of moisture adhering to the substrate after exposure.

Claim 51 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 50,

wherein in the transferring step, the amount of the moisture adhering to the substrate when the substrate is transferred to the heating section is made smaller than the amount of the moisture adhering to the substrate after exposure by transferring the substrate to the heating section while supplying a gas having a lower humidity than air to the exposure substrate.

Claim 52 (Withdrawn): The method as set forth in claim 48,
wherein the resist is a chemically amplified resist, the resolution reaction of which is
progressed by an acid produced by exposure.

Claims 53-61 (Canceled).

Claim 62 (Withdrawn): The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the control section
comprises:

- a first gas supply device for supplying an inert gas to the first area;
- a first exhaust device for exhausting an atmosphere in the first area;
- a second gas supply device for supplying the inert gas to the second area; and
- a second exhaust device for exhausting an atmosphere in the second area.

Claim 63 (New): The apparatus according to claim 36,
wherein the reaction inhibiting section cools the area of the substrate where a beam is
emitted earlier in time in the aligner to a lower temperature.

Claim 64 (New): The apparatus according to claim 36,
wherein the reaction inhibiting section cools the area of the substrate where a beam is
emitted earlier in time in the aligner earlier.

Claim 65 (New): The apparatus according to claim 36,
wherein the interface station has a first area before exposure and a second area after
exposure;

wherein the apparatus comprises a partition plate shutting off the second area from the first area; and

wherein the reaction inhibiting section is provided in the reaction inhibiting section.